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ABSTRACT

On October 1, 1949, the Chinese People's Consultative Conference enacted the "organic law" that formally created the People's Republic of China; the following day notes were delivered to consular offices in Peking stating that the new government considered it necessary that they establish regular diplomatic relations with all countries of the world. Was recognition of the People's Republic of China in the best interest of the United States? The attempt to answer this question generated a debate that took place within government, between government and interested segments of the population (the foreign policy elite), and in the mass media. This concern for understanding argument in context was also evident in the recommendations of the Commission on Freedom of the Press, the Hutchins Commission. The focus of the Commission was to ascertain whether the bid for recognition by the People's Republic was "truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent"; to provide a "context" which made the event meaningful; and to consider whether the mass media projected the opinions and attitudes of diverse groups in society. Whether more complete press coverage would have had any impact on public opinion or on United States policy can never be known. What can be concluded is that the press fell short of presenting the full range of facts and opinions held by the "policy elite," and to that extent fell short of the goal set forth in the Hutchins Commission report. (Eighty-two notes are included and one appendix listing the participants of a round table discussion group is attached.) (RAE)

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SHOULD THE UNITED STATES RECOGNIZE THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA?

ELITE OPINION and ELITE PRESS COVERAGE
OCTOBER--DECEMBER, 1949

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Abstract

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ELITE OPINION AND ELITE PRESS COVERAGE, OCTOBER -- DECEMBER, 1949

In October, 1949 the newly created People's Republic of China requested diplomatic recognition. This essay compares the opinions and options discussed among a representative group of the policy elite with the discussion of the decision whether to recognize the People's Republic that appeared in newspapers and magazines. The standards of coverage advanced by the Hutchins Commission serves as a framework for evaluating press representation of significant issues as discovered in the analysis of elite opinion .

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On October 1, 1949, the Chinese People's Consultative Conference enacted the "organic law" that formally created the People's Republic of China. The following day notes were delivered to consular offices in Peping stating that the new government considered it "necessary that the People's Republic of China establish regular diplomatic relations with all countries of the world."[1]

With the delivery of this diplomatic note the United States faced a clear choice. Was recognition of the People's Republic of China in the best interest of the United States? The attempt to answer this question generated a debate that took place within government, between government and interested segments of the population (the foreign policy elite)[2], and in the mass media. In order to understand both the decision itself and the processes that nurtured that decision, Philip Wander, in his essay "The Rhetoric of American Foreign Policy," suggests that it is necessary "to study argument in context--the historical context in which real people were in fact debating what for them were important issues."[3]

This concern for understanding argument in context was also evident in the recommendations of The Commission on Freedom of the Press, the Hutchins Commission.[4] This 1947 report still serves as a benchmark for standards of professional performance and media criticism.[5] In the summary volume, A Free and Responsible Press, the commission set out five general requirements that the press in a free society that has "assumed a leading role in the attempt to

establish peaceful relationships among all the states on the globe" should meet:

> Today our society needs, first, a truthful comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning; second, a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism; third, a means of projecting the opinions and attitudes of the groups in society to one another; fourth, a method of presenting and clarifying the goals and values of the society; and, fifth, a way of reaching every member of the society by the currents of information, thought, and feeling which the press supplies.[6]

This essay will focus on the first and second requirements outlined by the Hutchins Commission. Specifically, was the account of the bid for recognition by the People's Republic "truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent" as well as providing a "context" which made the event meaningful? Second, did the mass media project the opionins and attitudes of groups in society to one another?

In order to evaluate media performance some standard of truthfulness, comprehensiveness, intelligence, and of contextual richness must be established. In the following analysis the presentation of opinions and attitudes of the policy elite in the media will be taken as an indicator of the degree to which coverage met the standard suggested by the Commission. In this way, satisfying the second criterion outlined by the Hutchins Commission can be viewed as one means of achieving truthful, comprehensive, intelligent, and adequately contextualzed coverage. Coupled with this comparitive approach, a simple measure of quantity of coverage will serve as an aditional basis of evaluation.

While there was certainly more to the mass media than newspapers and magazines, as indicated in the subtitle to the Hutchins Commission report, this review is limited to these two media. Magazines and newspaper editorial content represent a recognized and organized forum for the presentation of

facts and opinions on matters of policy.[7] Newspaper coverage reviewed was limited to the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune for the period October 1 through October 10, 1949. Magazine coverage included Time, Life, Newsweek for the period October 1 through the last issue of 1949. The sample of policy elite opinion used in this analysis are from a confidential discussion held in the State Department October 6-8, 1949.

The question of recognition of a potential Communist government in China had been reviewed by the State Dpartment Policy Planning Staff and the National Security Council in 1948. Their conclusions were summarized in National Security Council document 34 (NSC 34) and in Policy Planning Staff document 39/1 (PPS 39/1) written in October and November of 1948 respectively.[8] NSC 34 and PPS 39/1 reflected assumptions that played a role in discussions by the elite as well as in media coverage. The first assumption was that in some deep, but not well articualted sense, China and the United States have a "special reltionship."[9] In the context of this relationship the acceptance of communism by the Chinese was viewed as a betrayal.[10] This, in turn, led to a mounting sense of U.S. frustration. With regard to China, historian Robert Dallek summs up the shift in attitude within the United States Government:

> But as Truman, Marshall, and others in the administration came to realize during the next year, it was impossible for the United States to influence the outcome of China's great internal struggle. That was a conclusion, however, which many polically active and influential Americans refused to accept . . . . The consequence was greater estrangement from the emerging Chinese communist government than there need have been.[11]

In the summer of 1949 Secretary of State Dean Acheson authorized the release of a report on the course of U.S.-China relations, the China White Paper.[12] Four hundred and nine pages of text, backed up by a further six hundred and forty-five pages of supporting material, the White Paper detailed

the diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China. Acheson hoped publication of the White Paper would clear the air, opening up the possibility of a re-assessment of U.S.-China relations. The effect, instead, was that it "confused the administration's supporters, provided new ammunition for its foes, and intensified political controversey over where we should go from there."[13]

Elite Opinion and the State Department Round Table

On October 6, 7, and 8, 1949 twenty-five individuals met in Washington to discuss American policy toward China. At the invitation of the State Department, a distinguished group of academics, businessmen, and former officials gathered to discuss U.S. options in light of the request for recognition by the People's Republic of China. This group represents the non-governmental portion of the foreign policy elite with reference to U.S.-Chinese relations. (For a list of the participants and their organizatinal affiliations, see Appendix A.) The State Department transcript of the discussion serves as the source of the following summary of elite opinion about U.S.-Chinese relations.[14]

UN Ambassador Philip Jessup served as chairmen for the meetings, with Dr. Raymond B. Fosdick, Ambassador Jessup's deputy, acting in his absence. The participants were assured that their remarks would remain confidential, and that no announcement of the meeting had been made.[15] At several points personnel from the State Department and CIA briefed the participants and were available for questions. Althoiugh there was a formal agenda of twenty-five questions, Fosdick encouraged the group to view these simply as discussion starters.[16] The result was a series of discussions that were responses to and deliberations on the formal presentations.

The first State Department staff briefing was from George F. Kennan. His

assignment was to put the situation in China into a "global context." This was followed by a briefing by W. Walton Butterworth, director of the Office for Eastern Affairs, about U.S. policy toward China. These set the stage for a broad discussion of U.S. policy with respect to China. Yet even before Mr. Kennan had started his presentation Kenneth Cologrove of Northwestern University asked:

> I suppose in the final analysis the Department may want an exchange of views with reference to recognition of the Chinese Communists or the formulation of a modus vivendi for trade and other relations without recognition. The State Department would like to have our views on that?
>
> Chairman [Fosdick]: Yes, indeed.[17]

The question of recognition was broached early and often in the discussions. The question of recognition had to be considered in light of the interests of the United States elsewhere in the world and elsewhere in Asia. Kennan's remarks repeated the assessment that he had developed in 1947-48 and are summarized in his Memoirs.[18] First, for the next generation, at least, the truly important theatre of conflict with Communism lay in Central Europe. Second, in Asia, the country that the United States needed to be most concerned with is not China, but Japan. U.S. policy should have as its goal a peaceful, prosperous, democratic Japan. Finally, with regard to fears that the combined might of China and the U.S.S.R. will be aligned against the United States, Kennan said, "It has been my own thought that the Russians are perhaps the people least able to combine with the Chinese in developing the resources of China and producing anything which in a physical sense would be dangerous to us."[19]

Butterworth's presentation focused on the practical details and legal framework of recognition. He asserted early in his presentation that the State Department was in no hurry to come to a decision, but "the world press

and particularly the American press wanted to force this problem onto us immediately."[20]

The participants questioned Butterworth on the possibility of having some sort of relationship with the People's Republic that falls short of full, de jurre recognition. Butterworth responded that it appeared to him that at some point in the not-too-distant-future the Communist government will insist on full recognition, coupled with the withdrawl of recognition from the Nationalist Government.

Bernard Brodie of Yale University summarized the discussion and introduced the next area of concern by asking:

> The question, as I see it, is do we have to assume now that China is lost to the Communists or do we not? The tenor of the White Paper, as I see it, is that it is. I should like to know for the experts around this table whether there is general agreement on that particular conclusion. It seems to me that is essential to everything else we have to discuss.[21]

The issues that emerged included the political and economic consequences of recognition and/or non-recognition in China, in the rest of Asia, and within the United States. What was the degree to which the government of Mao Tse-tung was controlled by Moscow and what inluence would U.S. recognition have on that relationship? Finally, what steps were needed to explain and promote U.S. policy in Asia to the U.S. population?

Discussion of the first issue, the practical effects of recognition or non-recognition were usually stated in terms that equated recognition of the People's Republic with "losing" China. The question that comes to mind today is: when did China stop being a separate soverign nation with which we have (or do not have) diplomatic relations and mutual obligations and become some type of American possession or protectorate that we could "lose?" This type of thinking went unchallenged until Owen Lattimore of Johns Hopkins University reacted to a series of remarks by Harold Stassen, University of Pennsylvania.

Stassen had commented that recognition of the People's Republic was "unthinkable . . . Even though the last vestage of military opposition disappears . . . a number of years should still go by before we recognize the new government."[22] Lattimore asked, "Since when and by whom was Asia given to America to solve all its problems?"[23] The question went unanswered and the discussion moved to another of the fundamental issues identified above, that of the need to explain American policy to the public and to congress. Stassen, for example, asserted that a policy involving aid to Communist China, in hopes of weaning her away from Russia would "never get through Congress."[24]

The equasion of recognition of the People's Republic with "losing" China to the Communists, led to discussion of what extent was the Communist government in China a willing servant to Moscow? Would this relationship pose a threat, and would that threat best be met by granting or withholding recognition? Kennan introduced the issue in his opening remarks and when he commented that Russians are the people "least able to combine with the Chinese. . . ."[25] Commenting on the relative roles of military power and ideological domination he introduced the term "Titoism." Yugoslavia in 1948-49, under Marshall Tito, had broken with Moscow and asserted an independent, nationalist, socialist policy. Titoism was a sort of shorthand for a Communism independent of Moscow's leadership.

Joseph W. Ballantine of the Brookings Institution described the present situation in China as one where "Russian domination . . . is an accomplished fact. . . ." Yet he held out hope that China may soon be "disillusioned" with Russia and free itself so that it would not be "lost to the free world . . ."[26] Again, the image of China "lost," into the hands of diabolical Russians, entered the discussion. Banker J. Morden Murphy offered an insightful alternative. He admited that we may be " washed up in China, if . . . washed up in

China means that we have lost the capability to make China completely an instrument of our own policy, . . . I think we are [emphasis in orig.] washed up." But he went on to warn that this did not mean "that we could assume that Russian influence would automaticlly predominate in China. I think that is a very unsound assumption."[27]

The discussion continued and Stassen argued that "softness" or aid was not the way to encourage Titoism to develop.[28] Shortly thereafter, Arthur Holcolmb of Harvard observed "in the long run it is by no means certain that Moscow will find it a better agent of its purposes that we found the Nationalist government to be of ours."[29] In light of events since 1949 this observation seems almost prophetic.

Discussion of the question of the nature and future of the relationship between China and the U.S.S.R. turned to the role of trade. Several speakers commented that to refuse to trade or carry on normal relations with China would only drive China more firmly into the Russian orbit. Nathaniel Peffer of Columbia asked somewhat ironically, "Shall we as Americans do most to keep Russia out by making ourselves as disagreeable as possible, by hanging on us the onus of having starved the Chinese?"[30] Benjamin Kizer, former head of UNRRA (United Nations Refugee Relief Administration), offered the observation that the most constructive course might be to try to remain as friendly and cooperative as possible.[31] Not only did this policy keep our options open in China, but it gave the U.S. added credibility with other nationalists groups in Southeast Asia. U.S. ability to deal calmly through normal diplomatic relations with Communist China would be seen as proof that we were not out to force any system on others, that Americans were not "imperialists."[32]

Consensus seemed to emerge that recognition of Communist China was both reasonable and advantagous as only a few participants held any real hope that the Nationalists would continue to control significant parts of China. Arthur

N. Holcombe of Harvard, summed up the consensus when he said, "I go along with those who have spoken . . . and I take it that most of those who have spoken would also add that since to get exactly the right time is exceedingly difficult, it is better to be too early than too late."[32]

In the final session the chairman encouraged the participants to deal explicitly with the question of recognition. While claiming to remain neutral, the chairman's introduction to the question was hardly without bias. He portrayed the alternatives in this way:

> There is the question of whether you recognize the Communist Government immediately on the one hand, or on the other hand, there is the picture or the phantom of a duplication of the situation which existed with respect to the Soviet Union over a period of 15 years practically in which we said it did not exist when it did exist and you know the complications which arose from that.[33]

After two participants (Eugene Staley and Kenneth Colegrove) tried to resurrect some form of recognition that was less than de jurre acknowledgement of the People's Republic, Portland, Oregon, banker Ernest B. MacNaughton took the floor. He offered this summary of the problems of recognition and public opinion:

> "Sitting in this room arguing and listening, I think I would say we had come to a state of mind where we would recognize the Communist Government in China but General Marshall has been whispering in my ear for the last few days that a lot of things we were talking about now you can not get the American public to take right now or the Congress to take . . . . I think the best procedure would be to watch and wait.[34]

Later, William R. Herod of International General Electric suggested that the United States face facts, admit the Nationalists no longer had the support of the masses of the Chinese people, do the practical thing, and recognize the People's Republic. His suggestion was greeted with the only strong, spontanious outburst noted in the record: "Here! Here!" came from the floor and drowned out the last part of Herod's sentence.[35] Lawrence K. Rosinger

commented that fears of a public opinion blow-up may have been over-stated.[36]

Given this conclusion, the participants in the Round Table Discussion considered how the public could be influenced to adopt this reasonable and pragmatic approach. There were two lines of discussion with respect to the question of how to operate within the boundaries created by U.S. public opinion. The first was to recognize that public opinion can be changed. As Lawrence Rossinger of the American Institute of Pacific Relations put it:

> I think, though, that in terms of preparing American public opinion for recognition, there is a process of disentanglement from the Chinese Nationalists which can be carried on in the weeks ahead, and I think to the extent that we disentangle ourselves from the Chinese Nationalists we lay the basis for recognition.[37]

Holcolmb had earlier identified the publication of the White Paper as "a good beginning and if the administration follows in the same spirit . . . I think it will get public support."[38]

The second approach to public opinion was a forlorn wish that it could be ignored. Macnaughton's account of General Marshall's reminder was an example of this. The strongest statement to this effect came from Peffer of Columbia. He asserted:

> Is it not a very dangerous principle now when the world is as tense as it is that we are going to surrender by default to the guy who is the best lobbyist and does the best propaganda, even when . . . [it] is against the best judgement of those who know the most about it?[39]

When put in these terms, of narrow minded lobbyists manipulating public opinion, the exchange of opinions called for in the Hutchns commission report did not seem attractive. While the "judgement of those who know the most about it" can serve as a benchmark against which media coverage may be judged, public opinion is a fact of life in America. Discussion of whether to recognize the new Chinese government went ahead in the pages of newspapers and magazines, and it is to this forum that we now turn.

The People's Republic in the Popular Press

Newspapers and magazines reviewed for this part of the investigation represent significant parts of the media. The New York Times is included because it has a reputation for extensive foreign coverage. The Chicago Tribune presents a a newspaper of substantial circulation that is known for a conservative political philosophy. No discussion of the American press and our relations with China in this period would be complete without a look at Time and Life. Newsweek was read to give an opportunity to compare two weekly news magazines.

This list certainly does not exhaust magazine and newspaper coverage of the creation of the People's Republic and its bid for diplomatic recognition. It does offer opportunities to compare coverage between outlets within the genres of daily newspapers (New York Times vs. Chicago Tribune), and weekly news magazines (Time vs. Newsweek).

The New York Times reported the proclamation of the People's Republic promptly and prominently. A page one story on Saturday, October 1, carried reports of the official formation of the People's Republic of China. The headline for the story addressed one of the three issues discussed in the State Department Round Table, the connection between Moscow and Peking. The text also introduced the issue of recognition, saying that the proclamation repeated "previously announced conditions for the establishment of diplomatic relations."[40]

The Sunday, October 2, 1949, edition carried another front page story, this one quoting from the proclamation issued the previous day. This permitted readers to see for themselves that the Chinese Communist government was now "willing to establish diplomatic relations . . . ."[41] While the subtleties of the difference between having "conditions for the establishment of diplomatic relations" as reported in the earlier story and expressing a

"willingness to establish" such relations may be more important for diplomats than for the average reader, New York Times stories during these two days illustrated coverage that was both comprehensive and truthful.

The Monday edition carried a page two story that dealt directly with the question of recognition. The article included the text of the note of transmittal that was delivered along with the proclamation. The story continued with speculation that the British were "anxious" to come to some sort of working agreement.[42]

The Sunday New York Times also ran a story on page one that described recognition of Communist China by the Soviet Union . The story continued on page two to include the full text of the notes from the Soviet Union recognizing the People's Republic and breaking relations with the Nationalist regime.[43] Page two also containd the full text of the proclamation of the new government.[44]

The New York Times commented on the new regime in Peking on the editorial page. "Red Rule in Peiping," the Times editorial was almost violent in its opposition. Calling the establishment of the People's Republic "the last act in the nauseous farce," the editorial went on to lambaste the new government and all who participated in it. The closing paragraph was a call not to recognize the Chinese Communists.[45]

In the following week the New York Times had several stories about recognition of China. Sam Brewer's story on Monday, October 3 addressed the question of who is to represent China in the United Nations. His story repeated charges by Nationalist representatives at the United Nations that the Communist regime was a puppet of Moscow and reported that the question of recognition was up to officials in Washington.[46] That same day State Department officials in Washington were anouncing that Congress would be consulted before any move to recognize the Communist regime in China would take place.

James Reston's story on the announcement not only paraphrased the State Department press release but also tried to put this unusual move into perspective. Remarking that the question of recognition of foreign governments is traditionally handled exclusively by the executive branch, Reston asserted that this unusual move was motivated by a recognition that relations between the United States and China are "so controversial." Reston's article quoted the State Department release that outlined criteria for recognition and then went on to provide historical background. He noted that under President Wilson additional criteria were introduced to justify non-recognition of the Soviet Union and that these "Wilson doctrine" criteria were likely once again to be a matter of controversey.[47]

An editorial, "China and Recognition," that appeared in this same issue of the Times also addressed the question of recognition. More moderate in tone than the editorial the preceding day, it questions the relationship between help from the Soviet Union and Chinese Communist successes to date. The editorial proposed that if the Soviet Union helped the Communists in China then this consitiutes "armed agression" under the United Nations charter. The Chinese were faced with the problem of looking and acting independently of Moscow, thus running the risk of "incurring the Kremlin's wrath against 'Titoism.'"[48] The prospect of "Titoism" is raised again in the first of a three part series by a Times correspondent returning from five months in Communist held territory.[49]

Trade with Communist China was the subject of an article October 7, 1949. Mao's government was reported to have a "keen interest in continuing trade with the United States and Britian."[50] In the second article in the three-part series, the Communist government is seen as wanting both diplomatic relations and continuing trade.

Within the first ten days after the proclamation of the People's Republic of China the New York Times has touched on the three issues that emerged in the State Department Round Table. The relationship between Moscow and Peiping was discussed. The question of recognition was treated, with a strong recommendation not to recognize the new government. Finally, role of public opinion was acknowledged, especially in Reston's article on the State Department announcement of consultation with Congress about recognition.

Direct mention of the proclamation of the People's Republic of China did not appear in the Chicago Tribune until October 3, 1949. When it did appear it was not page one news. The announcement of Russia's recognition of the People's Republic appeared on October 2, well back in the paper (p. 18). The story on Russian recognition carried a brief mention of the proclamation of the People's Republic in the last paragraph.[51] A story about the creation of Communist China did not appear until the following day. The story, a wire service account, was on page 14. The facing page had a story about U.S. ships held in the Nationalist blockade. Both the story about the creation of the new Chinese government and the one about the nationalist blockade were nine paragraphs, roughly the same length.[52]

While the New York Times was reprinting the proclamation of the new government and offering lessons in diplomatic history, the Tribune looked as if it hoped it could make the People's Republic disappear by ignoring it. There were no editorials about what U.S. policy toward China should be. The discussion of recognition is limited to a three paragraph story on October 5, 1949, that, again, is "buried" on page twenty. This story, citing "State Department sources," asserted that the question of recognition of China was not actively under consideration by the State Department.[53]

On October 8, the Tribune reported a speech given in Chicago by Patrick J. Hurley, Roosevelt's personsal representative. Hurley criticized the China

White Paper, and said, "Russia did not have to break any agreements in regard to China or in regard to other conquests." The story also repeated Hurley's charge that State Department personnel in China had supported the Communists against the Nationalist government.[54]

An October 10, 1949, story which originated from the Chicago Tribune Press Service reported charges by Arthur Kohlberg's American China Policy Association. Kohlberg was one of the leading organizers of the "China Lobby" and was a founding member of the American China Policy Association.[55] This story detailed 39 documents that were not included in the China White Paper. The key premise of the story was in the first paragraph. The story states as fact first, American "policy . . . resulted in the Communist victory in China." The second assertion was that "blame" needs to be assessed for what was fundamentally a "diplomatic failure in Asia."[56]

A rough gauge of comparison between the coverage in the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune in this period was accomplished by counting the number of stories about United States-China relations. Inconsistent reproduction from microfilm prevented use of column-inches as a standard of comparison so number of paragraphs was used as a means of comparing the quantity of coverage. For the ten days October 1 through October 10, 1949 the Chicago Tribune published a total of eight stories containing 71 paragraphs. The paragraph count is somewhat inflated since one of the stories was 27 paragraphs of which 20 were one sentence long; a list of documents the State Department had not included in the China White Paper. The next longest Tribune story was 14 paragraphs. During this same period the New York Times printed nine news stories plus two editorials. News stories in the Times totaled 148 paragraphs and the two editorials were each six paragraphs long, for a total of 160 paragraphs.

In contrast to the "ignore it and perhaps it will go away" attitude of the Chicago Tribune, Time and Life displayed open hostility to the Communist government of China. The first report originated from a Life reporter who lived in Shanghai from the time of the Communist occupation on May 25, until "late September." The worst he could report was that "the wickedest city on earth" had been transformed into a "nightmare of morality." The Communist authorities had closed the brothels and tried and executed a murderer.[57] A second and shorter article appears on December 19, 1949. By this time the Nationalist government had been driven to Formosa. Perhaps to forestall the thought of recognizing the Communist government after it had asserted substantial control over the mainland, Life readers were treated to this advice:

> Now is a good time to restate a few facts and principles having to do with China.
>
> The Communist regime now completing its conquest of the Chinese mainland is an enemy of the U.S. and of all that the U.S. stands for in Asia and elsewhere.
>
> Any recognition which signifies approval [emphasis added] of this regime will be a surrender to and approval of an enemy of the U.S. and all that it stands for.[58]

Time magazine's coverage of the proclamation of the People's Republic was more extensive. It reported that policy with respect to China was under review, and asserted that parts of the policy under consideration were "highly dangerous" and based on "highly dubious premise[s]." The story was accompanied by a map showing China, the Sea of Japan, Philippines, Okinawa, and Formosa. Drawn across the map was a "security line" curved toward China in order to include Formosa rather than running in a straight line from Japan, to Okinawa, and the Philippines. The key role of Formosa in the "security line" proved a central theme of the article.[59] In the same issue the proclamation of the People's Republic was reported along with part of the text of Mao's speech. The editors noted, "Neither Mao Tse-tung nor any of his comrades had a 'mandate' from the people."[60]

In the following week the magazine posed the question of whether to recognize Communist China. The fact that the Soviet Union had recognized the People's Republic was portrayed as "a sharp, significant display of comraderly teamwork."[61] This "teamwork" did not involve any official joint action, just Mao's bid for recognition, and a Soviet response. The connection between Moscow and Peking was brought home again in a subtle way via a photo caption in the October 31 edition. Under a picture of Chinese and British troops meeting at the approach to Hong Kong, the Chinese were called troops of "Soviet China."[62]

In a November, 1949, article on recognition, Time reported that the British favored recognition. The editors of Time sought to introduce a new criteria into the decision making about recognition. According to Time the Chinese Communists needed not only to control China but also "gain the support of the the Chinese people."[63]

By December, 1949 Time contended that the Chinese did not "deserve" recognition. Articles in Time also analyzed the links between Moscow and Peking and found no hope of "Titoism." Quoting the Economist, Britain's leading newsmagazine, the editors of Time charged "the China Reds represent a clear and present danger to the West."[64] The title of this article, "Moscow-Peking Axis" linked the Chinese Communist government to the U.S.S.R in a repeat of the fascist threat just past. The report the following week of Mao's visit to Moscow was similar in tone. While Mao was "paying fealty" to Stalin, readers were reminded yet again that "both were sworn enemies of the West."[65]

Neither Time nor Life directly addressed the relationship between policy decisions and public opinion. Time called the China White Paper "a report that put the best face on the U.S.'s weak and vascillating policy in Asia." When it came to appeasing public opinion, the White Paper was the best the

governemnt could do, and this document was characterized by Time as "evasive" and "shaky."[66]

Time's editorial policy was that recognition of the People's Republic was out of the question. It would be wrong to recognize, and therby "approve," this regime that lacked a "mandate." Time denied the possibility of driving a wedge between Peking and Moscow. There was no chance for "Titoism" when Mao was the feudal vassal of Stalin, and Moscow and Peking formed a familiar and threatening "Axis." Practical policy considerations were shifted from questions of the effects of recognition on U.S. political policy and economic interests to preserving the remaining Nationalist stronghold on Formosa.

The personal role played by Henry R. Luce, publisher of Time and Life, in shaping the coverage of events in China has been extensively documented. Luce was the son of American missionaries and was born and raised in China. He remained an active supporter of the nationalist government.

Theodore H. White was Luce's foremost reporter in China during World War II. The story of their quarrel illustrated both the degree of control Luce exercised over the content of his magazines. White, in his autobiography, outlined the course of the conflict. In White's opinion, the Luce publications came to be one of the most "distorting . . . lenses through which America saw China."[67] White explained the details of the conflict that led to his departure from Time, including parts of a long memo from Luce that justified Luce's devotion to Chiang Kai-shek in terms of China's intellectual and religious development. White returned to New York at the end of World War II and wrote (with Analee Jocob) Thunder Out of China, explaining why the United States should leave China to find her own destiny. Luce forced White to resign and White continued as one of the foremost journalists of his generation.[68]

White went on to other journalistic pursuits and Luce remained deeply concerned with the fate of China. Luce and his wife were both involved in several organizations in the United States that lobbied for increased aid to the Nationalist government.[69] In the years leading up to the proclamation of the People's Republic Luce, was a "member" of that loose network of friends and supporters of Chiang that came to be known as the "China Lobby." John K. Jessup, editor of a volume of Luce's speeches, wrote: ". . . in January, 1948 he [Luce] personally lobbied high-placed friends like Under Secretay of State Robert Lovett and Senator Arthur Vandenburg. By then he was bitter and almost without hope."[70] In a 1965 memoir Luce himself wrote:

> History says that the Communists took over mainland China in 1949. I have trouble remembering that date, because as far as I am concerned, the Communists had won in 1946, when the Marshall mission ended. The mission had been a tragedy for him and for China and for the cause of human freedom.[71]

W. A. Swanberg, in an extensive biography of Luce, provides a summary of the roots of the publisher's behavior and an assessment of his role in forming U.S. public opinion about China. Luce's conviction that the United States could shape the course of China, and Luce's virulant anti-communism both were rooted in his missionary heritage. The publications of Henry R. Luce were responsible in some measure for the shock many Americans experienced over the "loss of China." Because these publications were considered considered authoritative the biased and misleading picture of China they presented played a part in polarizing public opinion on this issue.[72]

Newsweek of October 3 carried news of the proclamation of the People's Republic, along with reports that foreign diplomats and nationals were being treated well.[73] With the fall of Canton several weeks later the question of recognition was brought up. Newsweek reported that President Truman had taken a "personal interest" in the question. "He [Truman] sees no reason for giving an official blessing to Mao Tse-tung's regime at this time."[74] In the follow-

ing weeks the question of recognition of Communist China was the subject of seven additional articles, one of which stressed the desire of the British to recognize the People's Republic and at the same time coordinate to policy with the United States.[75]

Newsweek speculated about the relationship between Moscow and Peking. The familiar hope of "Titoism" was mentioned in an October 31 article about British diplomacy in China.[76] Hopes of driving a wedge between Moscow and Peking were revived in a December report of a speech at the United Nations by Ambassador Phillip K. Jessup. Newsweek reported that the speech included "hints" of a policy toward China.[77]

One reason that Ambassador Jessup could only hint at a policy was that he had been subjected to attacks in the press at the mere suggestion of recognition. Secretary of State Dean Acheson acknowledged that:

> recognition of the Red regime could not even be considered under the circumstances. A mounting chorus of Congressional and public criticism was led by the Scripps-Howard, Hearst, and McCormick-Patterson newspapers.[78]

Acheson was getting unsolicited advice about how to conduct diplomacy that included instructions for the State Department from the El Passo Herald-Post "to put down its tea cup, pull in its pinkie, and start acting like the foreign office of a world power instead of the protocol division of a banana republic."[79]

Newsweek's coverage was more circumspect than that of Time. While willing to pass along colorful qoutes and diplomatic speculation, there were no apocalyptic warnings that the People's Republic of China was bent on destroying Western civilization. Newsweek was willing to entertain the notion that China may have been open to "Titoism." By December, 1949 the United States was still not prepared to recognize Communist China, but was willing to let Britain recognize the People's Republic and represent U.S. interests.

Newsweek did not claim to create or even directly influence, public opinion. Readers did not receiver either the blunt warnings found in Time nor the lessons in diplomatic history that appeared in the New York Times. The magazine, however, did recognize the role of public opinion as an influence on policy makers. Reports of attacks on the Secretary of State and acknowledgement of the controversial nature of our relations appeared in several stories.

For purposes of quantitative comparison between Time & Life and Newsweek the two stories in Life are included in the Time totals. From October 1 through December 30, 1949 Time & Life published a total of 17 stories about events in China or about diplomatic relations between China and other countries. Of these stories, eight explicitly mentioned diplomatic recognition. During this same period Newsweek published a total of 19 stories about events in China. Of this 19 six were short "Periscope" stories of 200 words or less. Ten Newsweek stories mentioned the question of diplomatic recognition, and of this group three were "Periscope" pieces.

Elite Opinion, Press Opinion, and Recognition

U.S. recognition of the People's Republic of China did not take place until January 1, 1979.[80] In spite of the recommendation of the State Department Round Table participants to recognize the People's Republic, another course of action was followed. While it is impossible to "prove" that any single newspaper or magazine, or even the whole concert of the mass media persuaded the Truman Administration not to recognize Communist China, the popular press no doubt played some part in the decision.

Able to formulate a scenario that escaped a simplistic "with us or against us" choice, the participants in the Round Table discussion favored recognition. They saw recognition as the best way to preserve American interests, to foster trade, to maintain credibility with nationalists in other

Southeast Asian nations, and to offer China an alternative to Russian satellite status. The popular press equated recognition with approval, offering a positive moral sanction to the Communist government of China. Seen in these terms, recognition became "abandoning" the Nationalist cause and endorsing the Communist menace.

The prospect that the People's Republic of China and the U.S.S.R. would have differences over policy and goals was discussed in both the Round Table and the popular press as "Titoism." Round Table participants went beyond speculation about whether this would happen, to proposals that recognition was a tool to help it come about. Only if the United States was involved in an ongoing relationship could America expect to benefit from differences between Moscow and Peking. In the popular press the possibility of Moscow-Peking disagreement was either dismissed (Time and Life), or mentioned as a remote possibility, not connected with the matter of recognition.

Finally, with respect to the role of public opinion, there are differences. The press acknowledged the fact that public opinion constrained policy choices. Newsweek, in an article that stressed press criticism of U.S. policy, almost seemed to enjoy quoting the Secretary of State saying that recognition was "out of the question."[81] Inviting Congress to participate in the decision whether to recognize was an admission that unpopular policies led to attempts to "share the blame." The foreign policy elite saw public opinion as an obstacle to be overcome once correct policy was determined. Round Table participants called for administration "leadership" and a concentrated follow-up to the China White Paper. Round Table participants opposed letting policy be set by the best lobbyist.

The overall relationship between United States policy toward China and U.S. public opinion has been extensively analyzed by both historian Richard Dallek and public opinion researcher Leonard Kusnitz. Kusnitz, in his book

Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: America's China Policy, 1949-1979 concluded that "overall [emphasis in original] there has been a remakable degree of harmony between policy and public preference." Kusnitz further concludes that the delay in recognition of the People's Republic was influenced by public opinion. Only after Chinese Communist troops entered the Korean war was the option of recognizing the People's Republic dropped by the Truman administration.[82]

Conclusions about overall press performance based on a sample this small would be premature. However, some trends in the coverage of the question of United States recognition of the People's Republic of China were evident. In terms of meeting the standard of truthful, comprehensive and intelligent reporting that placed events in a context that provided meaning the performance was mixed. Only the New York Times provided background information that made the relationship between recognition of China's new government and approval of the policies and politics of the new regime clear. In the rest of the reporting, diplomatic recognition was equated with approval. The Chicago Tribune can hardly be said to have provided coverage that was complete, even though the stories were factually correct.

Time and Life followed the editorial policy of their owner to such an extent that their most talented and most experienced China reporter, T. H. White, felt compelled to leave and write a book about what was really going on in China. By comparison, Newsweek avoids some of the most obvious distortions that appeared in the Luce publications.

The most serious failing in all of the media sampled was an absence of conflicting points of view. The segment of informed opinion represented in the State Department Round Table discussion was underrepresented in the press. The issue raised in the round table discussion about future Soviet-Chinese

relations was mentioned in the press, but there was no discussion of the role recognition by the United States could play in promoting "Titoism."

Whether the presentation of more complete coverage would have had any impact on public opinion or on U.S. policy can never be known. What can be concluded is that the press fell short of presenting the full range of facts and opinions held by the "policy elite," and to that extent fell short of the goal set forth in the Hutchins Commission report.

Notes

[1]Walter Sullivan, "China's Communists in Recognition Bid," New York Times, 3 October, 1949, Sec. 1, p. 2.

[2]Raymand H. Dawson, The Decision to Aid Russia, 1941: Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), pp. xiii-xiv. The role of the foreign policy elite and the criteria for inclusion in this group are discussed in Charles W. Kegley, Jr. & Eugene R. Wittkopf, American Foreign Policy: Pattern and Process (2nd ed.), (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1982) pp. 305-308.

[3]Philip Wander, "The Rhetoric of American Foreign Policy," The Quarterly Journal of Speech 70 (November, 1984) : 341.

[4]The Commission on Freedon of the Press, A Free and Responsible Press: A General Report on Mass Communication: Newspapers, Radio Motion Pictures, Magazines, and Books, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1947). refered to hereafter as Hutchins Commission.

[5]Jerilyn S. McIntyre, "Repositioning a Landmark: The Hutchins Commission and Freedom of the Press," Critical Studies in Mass Communication 4 (1987) 136-137.

[6]Hutchins Commission, pp. 20-21.

[7]The role of magazines as a forum of opinion in the period just prior to that under consideration here is developed by Ronald S. Reing, "America Looking Outward: American Cold War Attitudes During the Crucial Years, 1945-1947, as Reflected in the American Magazine Meduim" (Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1974), pp. 5-6. The role of newspapers as chronicler of the opinion of the general public is supported by Dawson, p. xiv.

[8]NSC 34 and PPS 39/1 are reproduced in Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis, eds. Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950, (New York, NT: Columbia University Press, 1978) pp. 240-251. The phrase

quoted is on page 250.

[9]Michael Schaller, The United States and China in the Twentieth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979 paperback ed.), pp. 3-36. also Foster Rhea Dulles, American Policy Toward Communist China 1949-1969 (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1972), pp. 6-23.

[10]Schaller, p. 17.

[11]Robert Dallek, "The Postwar World: Made in the USA," in Estrangement: America and the World, ed. Sanford J. Unger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 39.

[12]U.S. Department of State, The China White Paper: United States Relations with China with Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949, Publication No. 3573 Far Eastern Series 30. The edition used here is that reprinted by Stanford University, Stanford University Press, 1967. Refered Hereafter as CWP.

[13]Dulles, p. 44.

[14]U.S. Department of State, Transcript of Round Table Discussion on American Policy Toward China, 6, 7, 8 October, 1949. Future references will be as RT, Speaker's Name, and page no(s).

[15] RT, Fosdick, p. 2.

[16]RT, Fosdick, p. 7-8.

[17]RT,Colegrove, p.10.

[18] F. Kennan, Memoirs: 1925-1950 (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967), pp. 373-381.

[19]RT, Kennan, p. 24.

[20]RT, Butterworth, p. 53.

[21]RT, Brodie, p.94.

[22]RT, Stassen, p. 129.

[23]RT,Lattimore, p. 152.

[24]RT, Stassen, p. 161.

[25]RT, Kennan, p. 24.

[26]RT, Ballantine, p. 100.

[27]RT, Murphy, p. 106-107.

[28]RT, Stassen, p. 161.

[29]RT, Holcombe, p. 180

[30]RT, Peffer, p. 340.

[31]RT, Kizer, p. 344.

[32]RT, Peffer, p. 230-232.

[33]RT, Chairman, p. 416.

[34]RT, MacNaughton, p. 420-412.

[35]RT, Herod, p. 423.

[36]RT, Rosinger, p. 444.

[37]RT, Rossinger, p. 444.

[38]RT, Holcombe, p. 428.

[39]RT, Peffer, p. 425.

[40]Walter Sullivan, "Mao Heads Peping Regime; Program Supports Moscow," New York Times, 1 October, 1949, Sec. 1 pp. 1,4.

[41]Walter Sullivan, "Reds Proclaim Republic in China; Chou is Premier," New York Times, 2 October, 1949, Sec. 1, pp. 1, 17.

[42]Walter Sullivan, "China's Communists in Recognition Bid," New York Times, 3 October, 1949, Sec. 1, p. 2.

[43]Walter Sullivan, "Soviet Recognizes Red Regime," New York Times, 2 October, 1949, Sec. 1, pp. 1, 2.

[44]"Proclamation of China's Communist Government," New York Times, 2 October, 1949, Sec. 1, p. 2.

[45]Red Rule in Peiping," New York Times, 2 October, 1949, Sec. 4, p. 8E.

[46]Sam P. Breuer, "New U.N. Rift Seen on Red China Issue," New York Times, 3 October, 1949, Sec. 1, pp. 1, 3.

[47]James Reston, "Congress to Share in Any U.S. Action Approving Peiping," New York Times, Sec. 1, pp. 1, 6.

[48]"Chiana and Recognition," New York Times, 3 October, 1949, Sec. 1, p. 26.

[49]Henry R. Lieberman, "Communists Face Pitfalls in China," New York Times, 6 October, 1949, Sec. 1, p. 14.

[50]Henry R. Lieberman, "China's Reds Seek Trade with West," New York Times, 7 October, 1949, Sec. 1, p. 10.

[51]"Moscow Prompt in Recognizing China's Red Rule," Chicago Tribune, 2 October, 1949, Sec. 1 p. 18.

[52]"Reds Proclaim Rule of China; Chou is Premier," Chicago Tribune, 3 October, 1949, Sec. 1, p. 14. The story about U.S. shipping and the blockade is "U.S. Ship Held by China Says She's In Peril," Sec. 1, p. 13.

[53]"Red China's Bid for Link to U.S. is Pigeonholed," Chicago Tribune, 5 October, 1949, Sec. 1, p. 20.

[54]"Hurley Labels White Paper on China 'Bad Alibi'," Chicago Tribune, 8 October, 1949, Sec. 1, p. 4.

[55]Joseph Keeley, The China Lobby Man: The Story of Alfred Kohlberg, (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1966) provides a sympathetic portrait. Ross Y. Koen, The China Lobby in American Politics, (New York, NY: Octagon Books, Div. of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974) pp. 51-54 presents a much less sympathetic picture.

[56]"U.S. State Dept. Dodges 39 Key Papers on China," Chicago Tribune, 10 October, 1949, Sec. 2, p. 7.

[57]Robert Doyle, "Report on Communist Shanghai," Life, 17 October, 1949, p. 129.

[58]"And Now Formosa," Life, 19 December, 1949, p. 24

[59]"Policies and Principles: 'If I Could Visualize . . . ,'" Time, 3 October, 1949, p. 18.

[60]"China: Democratic Dictatorship," Time, 3 October, 1949, p. 24.

[61]"Nations: Teamwork," Time, 10 October, 1949, p. 28.

[62]"On the Border," Time, 31 October, 1949, p. 25.

[63]"Policies & Principles: Toward Recognition," Time, 21 November, 1949, pp. 29-30.

[64]"The Nations: Moscow-Peking Axis," Time, 19 December, 1949, p. 18.

[65]"The Nations: Meeting in Moscow," Time, 26 December, 1949, p. 13.

[66]"Foreign Relations: The Professor is Out," Time, 26 December, 1949, p. 0

[67]Theodore H. White, In Search of History: A Personal Adventure, (New York, NY: Warner Books, 1979), p. 206.

[68]For a full account of the White-Luce disagreement over reporting from China see White, pp.206-213, 245-249.

[69]Koen, pp. 50-51, 89.

[70]John K. Jessup, ed. The Ideas of Henry Luce, (New York, NY: Atheneum, 1969) p. 191.

[71]Henry R. Luce, "How China Fell," in Jessup, ed. Ideas of Henry Luce, p. 206.

[72]W. A. Swanberg, Luce and His Empire, (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), p. 283.

[73]"China: The Red Republic," Newsweek, 3 October, 1949, p. 45.

[74]"China: The Recognition Question," Newsweek, 17 October, 1948, pp. 40-41.

[75]Articles in October about British-U.S. recognition and cooperation include: "The Periscope: Chia Policy Split," Newsweek, 24 October, 1949, pp.

15-16, and "China: Recognition Build-up," Newsweek, 31 October, 1949, pp. 30-31.

[76]"China: Recognition Build-up," p. 31.

[77]"The Periscope: U.S. China Policy," Newsweek, 12 December, 1949, p. 15

[78]"China: Viking Isbrandtsen," Newsweek, 28 October, 1949, pp. 32-34.

[79]"Diplomacy: New Blows in the Age of Insult," Newsweek, 5 December, 1949, p. 26-28.

[80]Schaller, p. 190.

[81]"China: Viking Isbrandtsen," p. 34.

[82]Robert Dallek, The American Style of Foreign Policy: Cultural Politics and Foreign Affairs, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983). The theme of the influence of public opinion on foreign policy choices is a central concern of this work, with material on the Chinese situation appearing at pp. 177-180. Leonard A. Kusnitz, Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: America's China Policy, 1949-1979 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984) pp. 173-174.

Appendix A

List of Participants
in
Round Table Discussion on
American Policy toward China
October 6, 7 and 8, 1949

Joseph W. Ballantine
The Brookings Institution

Bernard Brodie
Yale university

Claude A. Buss
Army War College

Kenneth Colegrove
Northwestern University

Arthur G. Coons
Occidental College

John W. Decker
International Missionary Council

John K. Fairbank
Harvard University

William R. Herod
International General Electric Company

Arthur N. Holcombe
Harvard university

Benjamin H. Kizer
Lawyer, Formerly Director China Office UNRRA*

Owen Lattimore
Johns Hopkins University

Ernest B. MacNaughton
First National Bank of Portland Oregon

George C. Marshall
American Red Cross

J. Morden Murphy
Banker

Nathaniel Peffer
Columbia University

Harold S. Quigley
University of Minnesota

Edwin O. Reischauer
Harvard University

William S. Robertson
American and Foreign Power Company

John D. Rockefeller III
Rockefeller Brother's Fund

Laurence K. Rosinger
American Institute of Pacific Relations

Eugene Staley
World Affairs Council of Northern California

Harold Stassen
University of Pennsylvania

Phillips Talbot
University of Chicago

George E. Taylor
University of Washington

Harold M. Vinacke
University of Cincinnati

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